

Message Text

SECRET

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
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INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 TEL AVIV 4501

EXDIS DIST AS NODIS

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, PEPR, EG, IS
SUBJ: WEIZMAN VISIT: HIS ACCOUNT

REF: CAIRO 9802

1. I MET APRIL 3 FOR AN HOUR AND A HALF WITH WEIZMAN TO DISCUSS SOUTH LEBANON (SEPTTEL) AND TO GET HIS VERSION OF HIS CONVERSATIONS IN CAIRO. DURING OUR TALK, WEIZMAN DREW HEAVILY FROM A DETAILED REPORT WRITTEN BY BARAK. HIS ACCOUNT WAS SIMILAR TO MUBARAK'S, WITH A FEW IMPORTANTLY DIFFERENCE NUANCES.

2. WEIZMAN DESCRIBED SADAT AS BEING MORE RELAXED THAN AT PREVIOUS MEETINGS AND SAID THAT IF NICETIES WERE THE OVERRIDING FACTOR "WE HAVE SIGNED A PEACE TREATY ALREADY." HE BELIEVES THAT SADAT MAY HAVE INITIALLY SEEN HIS TRIP AS AN "ISRAELI STUNT" IN REACTION TO THE PERCEIVED STRAINED RELATIONS BETWEEN THE USG AND ISRAEL. (WEIZMAN HINTED THAT SADAT WAS NOT TOTALLY WRONG.) AS USUAL, SADAT WANTED TO TALK ONLY BROAD PRINCIPLES WITH DETAILS TO BE WORKED OUT LATER AT TECHNICAL LEVELS.

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3. WEIZMAN SAID THE CRUX OF THE MEETINGS WAS SADAT'S REPEATED INSISTENCE ON THE NEED FOR A BROAD DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES CALLING FOR ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL TO PRE-1967 BORDERS WITH MINOR ADJUSTMENTS SUBJECT TO NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN ALL PARTIES CONCERNING ISRAEL'S SECURITY PROBLEMS. WEIZMAN ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THIS LATTER PHRASE WAS ENCOURAGING EVIDENCE THAT SADAT NOW TAKES ISRAEL'S SECURITY

PROBLEM MORE SERIOUSLY. NONETHELESS, HE HAD TO TELL SADAT THAT IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR ISRAEL TO ISSUE SUCH A DECLARATION WITH RESPECT TO TOTAL OR NEAR-TOTAL WITHDRAWAL FROM THE WEST BANK. HE BOILED DOWN WHAT SADAT HAD TO SAY AT THE FIRST MEETING TO: (1) NO PALESTINIAN STATE; (2) NO PLO; AND (3) THE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF A REQUIREMENT FOR CONTINUED ISRAELI SECURITY PRESENCE ON THE WEST BANK. (CONTRARY TO MUBARAK'S REPORT, WEIZMAN INSISTS THAT SADAT MADE NO MENTION OF DURATION FOR THE PRESENCE OF ISRAELI SECURITY FORCES.) QUESTIONS OF THE TYPE OF ADMINISTRATION ON THE WEST BANK, THE ORGANIZATION OF A POLICE FORCE, VETO POWERS OF THE PARTIES CONCERNED, ETC., ALSO WERE DISCUSSED. WEIZMAN SAID BARAK AT ONE POINT TOLD SADAT THAT THE EGYPTIAN POSITION WAS BASICALLY NOT DISSIMILAR TO BEGIN'S SELF-RULE PLAN. SADAT RESPONDED THAT IF ISRAEL COMES UP WITH SUCH A PROPOSAL THE ARABS WOULD NOT BUY IT, BUT IF HE, SADAT, PROPOSES SOMETHING "IT MIGHT HAPPEN."

4. SADAT THEN ASKED WEIZMAN WHY BEGIN "KEEPS ON INSULTING ME" AND MADE SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO BEGIN'S SPEECH IN THE KNESSET THE NIGHT BEFORE. WEIZMAN INSISTED THAT BEGIN HAD NO INTENTION OR DESIRE TO INSULT SADAT; RATHER THAT HIS REMARKS SHOULD BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY, AND WERE INDEED QUITE TEMPERATE. THIS ENDED THE THURSDAY MEETING WHICH LASTED ABOUT TWO HOURS.

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5. WEIZMAN DESCRIBED THE RESULTS AS "NOTHING SUBSTANTIAL" SAYING THAT SADAT WANTED A BIG WITHDRAWAL STATEMENT WHICH ISRAEL CANNOT GIVE, BUT WEIZMAN SAW SOME POSITIVE SIGNS IN THE FACT THAT SADAT WAS TALKING ABOUT PRACTICAL WEST BANK/GAZA ARRANGEMENTS BEING NEGOTIABLE. WEIZMAN LEFT THIS MEETING BELIEVING THAT IT WAS THE ONLY ONE WHICH WOULD TAKE PLACE AND, BEFORE ANOTHER MEETING AT THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL COULD BE POSSIBLE, SUBORDINATES WOULD HAVE TO WORK ON DETAILS. (THIS WAS APPARENTLY THE CONTEXT IN WHICH THERE WAS DISCUSSION OF BARAK'S RETURNING TO CAIRO BEFORE WEIZMAN'S NEXT TRIP.)

6. ON FRIDAY MORNING GAMASY CALLED ABOUT 8:00 A.M. AND TOLD WEIZMAN THAT CONTRARY TO SADAT'S NORMAL PRACTICE, A MEETING WAS SET UP AT THE UNHEARD OF HOUR OF 9:30 A.M. AT THIS SECOND MEETING SADAT TOLD WEIZMAN THAT HE HAD MET WITH SOME PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATIVES FROM GAZA LATE ON THURSDAY AND THAT THE PALESTINIANS COULD NOT ACCEPT WHAT SADAT HAD SAID AT THE FIRST MEETING CONCERNING NO PALESTINIAN STATE. THE PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATIVES HAD INSISTED UPON SELF-DETERMINATION. THUS, SADAT

COULD NOT ASSURE WEIZMAN THAT WHAT HE HAD INITIALLY SAID WOULD HOLD UP. WEIZMAN TOLD SADAT THAT SELF-DETERMINATION WAS NOT ACCEPTABLE. (AS AN ASIDE, WEIZMAN WONDERED WHO IT WAS FROM GAZA THAT SADAT HAD ACTUALLY TALKED TO, SINCE PRELIMINARY ISRAELI CHECKS HAD REVEALED THAT NO GAZAN OF ANY CONSEQUENCE WAS IN CAIRO. HE WAS INCLINED TO BELIEVE THAT THE EGYPTIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS SUDDEN REVERSAL OF FIELD, NOT THE PALESTINIANS.)

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AT THIS POINT WEIZMAN APPARENTLY TRIED TO FLATTER SADAT, SAYING THAT HE "DOUBTED A FEW PALESTINIANS COULD CHALLENGE SO BRAVE AND STRONG A MAN." BARAK REFERRED TO THE EGYPTIAN ISMAILIA PROPOSAL FOR THE DECLARATION, AND BOTH HE AND WEIZMAN ATTEMPTED TO CONVINCE SADAT NOT TO RETURN TO A FLAT CALL FOR SELF-DETERMINATION AND NOT TO PRESS ISRAEL ON THIS MATTER. (BARAK APPARENTLY ALSO REFERRED

TO THE FORMULATION INVOLVING "NEIGHBORING STATES" WHICH BARAK AND DAYAN HAD TRIED OUT ON SECRETARY VANCE IN WASHINGTON.) WEIZMAN SAYS HE THEN PROPOSED THAT "THEY DECIDED AT THAT POINT THAT THEY COULDN'T DECIDE," BUT HE STRESSED THAT ISRAEL AGREED "THE PALESTINIAN ARABS IN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA HAVE A RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE IN THEIR FUTURE THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF TALKS BETWEEN EGYPT, JORDAN AND ISRAEL." HE SAID SADAT ASSURED HIM THAT HE WOULD THINK ABOUT THIS QUESTION FURTHER AND PROVIDE AN ANSWER, WHICH IS WHERE WEIZMAN SAYS THINGS NOW STAND.

7. IN COMPARING WEIZMAN'S ACCOUNT WITH MUBARAK'S (REF),

IT IS OBVIOUS THAT THE DIFFERENCES ARE NOT GREAT,
ESPECIALLY SINCE MUBARAK WAS SPEAKING WITHOUT BENEFIT
OF NOTES. WEIZMAN SAID HE READILY AGREED TO THE U.S.

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BEING BRIEFED ON THE MEETINGS, (SIC), ALTHOUGH THERE WAS
A SLIGHT HESITATION AS HE TOLD ME THIS. WEIZMAN READILY
ACKNOWLEDGED THAT HE HAD PROBED HARD FOR SADAT'S AGREEMENT
TO NEGOTIATE "A FIRST PEACE," WHICH MUBARAK CALLS A
"BILATERAL AGREEMENT." WEIZMAN DID NOT SEE MUCH DIFFERENCE
AT ALL BETWEEN WHAT SADAT HAD TO SAY AT THESE MEETINGS
AND THAT WHICH HE SAID AT ISMAILIA. HE CHARACTERIZED
SADAT'S APPROACH AS BEING READY TO GO FOR A SEPARATE
PEACE WITH ISRAEL, SUBJECT TO A DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES
AND TO A "FIRST REFUSAL" BY JORDAN. HE DID ADMIT THAT
SADAT BELIEVES THAT A COMPREHENSIVE PEACE RATHER THAN
A SEPARATE PEACE IS BEST FOR ALL CONCERNED AND THAT THE
PALESTINIAN PROBLEM "HAD TO BE SERIOUSLY TACKLED" (NOT
"RESOLVED," AS IN MUBARAK'S ACCOUNT). WEIZMAN INSISTS
THAT WHAT SADAT SAYS HE NEEDS IS A DECLARATION OF INTENT
TO WITHDRAW RATHER THAN WITHDRAWAL ITSELF, AT LEAST
FOR NOW, CONTRARY TO FIRST SENTENCE OF PARA FOUR, REFTEL.

8. ON THE QUESTION OF ISRAELI FORCES REMAINING IN THE
WEST BANK, WEIZMAN SAYS THAT SADAT AT NO TIME INSISTED
UPON OR EVEN MENTIONED A FIVE-YEAR PERIOD.

9. WEIZMAN IS NOW WAITING FOR A MESSAGE FROM SADAT
CONCERNING FUTURE MEETINGS WHICH HE ANTICIPATES WILL TAKE
PLACE IN ALEXANDRIA PRIOR TO APRIL 16. THERE IS A POSSI-
BILITY THAT BARAK MIGHT MEET EARLIER WITH GAMASY BUT
WEIZMAN ALMOST LAUGHED ME OUT OF THE ROOM WHEN I ASKED
IF MEIR ROSENNE WOULD ALSO PARTICIPATE. HE ALSO SAYS
THAT HE REFERRED ONLY IN PASSING TO THE SUBJECT OF THE
RECONVENING OF THE POLITICAL AND MILITARY COMMITTEES,
AND THINKS HE MAY HAVE ALSO SUGGESTED THE DESIRABILITY
OF HAVING ONLY ONE COMMITTEE RATHER THAN TWO. ACCORDING
TO WEIZMAN, THE SINAI WAS NOT DISCUSSED AT ALL. HE

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HOPES THAT THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT SADAT BELIEVES THAT
THERE ARE NO QUESTIONS LEFT CONCERNING THE SINAI, BECAUSE
THERE CERTAINLY ARE, BUT HE DID NOT ATTACH TOO MUCH
IMPORTANCE TO THE SUBJECT NOT BEING DISCUSSED. HE CLAIMS
TO BE UNEASY ABOUT HAVING TO ENCROACH ON DAYAN'S TURF
IN THESE LENGTHY DISCUSSIONS OVER THE WEST BANK-GAZA

(PROPERLY POLITICAL COMMITTEE MATERIAL), BUT SEEMS
PREPARED TO CONTINUE AS LONG AS BEGIN AND DAYAN AGREE.
HE WAS CLEARLY GREATLY RELIEVED TO HAVE BARAK AT HIS
SIDE, HOWEVER. ON BALANCE, WEIZMAN THINKS THE CHANCE
FOR AGREEMENT REMAINS AND HE IS DETERMINED TO PERSEVERE,
HOPING THAT SADAT WILL EVENTUALLY SEE THAT "HE TOO MUST
GIVE SOME CONCESSIONS SOMEWHERE."

10. I AM COMMENTING ON THIS CONFUSING NEGOTIATING
SITUATION SEPARATELY, AND ALSO REPORTING SEPARATELY ON
HOW BEGIN SIZES UP THE RESULTS OF WEIZMAN'S TRIP.
LEWIS

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